



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**EVENT: Guilty Verdict**

**Defendant: Damon L. Stephens**

**SAGINAW MAN CONVICTED ON FEDERAL NARCOTICS CHARGES**

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A 33-year-old Saginaw man was found guilty today by a federal jury in Bay City on charges of distribution of cocaine and possession of cocaine base, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Valerie J. Goddard, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Found guilty was Damon L. Stephens.

The jury deliberated for approximately three hours before returning the verdict, concluding a three-day trial before United States District Judge Thomas Ludington.

The evidence presented at trial showed that Stephens was trafficking in cocaine in the Saginaw area during 2005 and 2006 and that he sold a quantity of cocaine to a government informant in April of 2006. Additional evidence showed that Stephens was arrested during the

execution of a search warrant at a residence in Saginaw in June of 2006 and was found in possession of a quantity of cocaine base, which is commonly referred to as crack cocaine. The indictment arose out of an investigation by federal and state law enforcement officers into drug trafficking activities of street gangs in Saginaw, including a gang known as the Sunnyside Gang that is believed to have engaged in drug trafficking and various related acts of violence in the south side of the City of Saginaw for a number of years.

“The prosecution of gang-related drug trafficking is a high priority of my office. This case is a good example of the kind of results that can be obtained from effective state and federal cooperation,” United States Attorney Murphy said.

ATF Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard stated, “Today, one of Saginaw’s worst of the worst offenders is behind bars as a result of the tireless efforts of our agents and task force officers working together. I’m grateful to live in a state where heroes live amongst us and are willing to risk their lives to make a difference; to make our neighborhoods safe.

Murphy commended the work of the agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, state and local officers assigned to the Bay Area Narcotics Enforcement Team (BAYANET) and federal, state and local officers assigned to the Saginaw SAFE Streets in this investigation.

Sentencing has been scheduled for June 21, 2007, at 3:30 P.M. Stephens has four prior convictions for felony drug offenses. As a result of these prior convictions he is considered a Career Offender under federal law and will be sentenced pursuant to the federal sentencing guidelines. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hluchaniuk.